

## FARE GRAB BILLS HAVE THE BACKING OF STEAM ROADS

They, Too, Expect to Boost  
Fares Under "Jokers" in  
Jenks Measure.

By Joseph S. Jordan.  
(Special Staff Correspondent of The  
Evening World.)  
ALBANY, April 8.—A check has  
been put on the traction bills, which  
were scheduled to be rushed through  
in the last days of the legislative  
session, owing to their timely expo-  
sure by The Evening World. A pub-  
lic hearing has been ordered by the  
Judiciary Committee, which the peo-  
ple behind the "April Fool" measure  
thought was dead.  
The Jenks bills comprising the  
grab of the traction companies and,  
in particular, the Interborough of  
New York, are not going through with  
the secrecy and despatch first in-  
tended. Chairman Louis M. Martin

of the Judiciary Committee yester-  
day consented to a public hearing on  
the measures and designated Tues-  
day, April 13, as the date.  
The Jenks bills not only permit  
an increase in fares to 10 cents, but  
give to the Public Service Com-  
mission the power to fix the rate.  
This means that if a fare should not  
be established at 10 cents by the  
traction company, and a complaint  
administration, the Public Service  
Commissioner can fix the rate at any  
amount he wishes.  
According to witnesses in the Leg-  
islature, the Jenks bills are sched-  
uled to be rushed through in the clos-  
ing hours of the Legislature. They  
mean to the travelling public a cost  
of \$1,000,000,000 a year. The only  
chance to prevent their passage is a  
public hearing, which has been or-  
dered through the intervention of As-  
semblyman Louis A. Cuvillier, Demo-  
crat of Manhattan.  
This is the one chance that the  
public will have of altering the char-  
acter of the bills, and it is safe to  
say the chance in favor of the public  
is a small one.  
It would seem that the allied  
steam railroad companies of the  
State, under the leadership of the  
New York Central, are the real  
powers behind the bills. By a  
construction of the service-at-cost  
measures, all common car-  
riers of the State, street railroads  
and steam railroads alike, will be  
permitted to apply to the Public  
Service Commissioner for "relief"  
from low fares in violation of  
their charter contracts and fran-  
chise stipulations.  
The New York Central plans to ask

for an increase in passenger rates on  
its main line, from three to four cents,  
and maybe five cents per mile, which  
would practically double the existing  
rates. The New York Central has a  
charter stipulation to carry passen-  
gers between New York and Buffalo  
for two cents per mile, which rate is  
being flagrantly violated every day.  
One of the sections of the Jenks  
bills has the appearance of a  
big steal. It nullifies the permis-  
sive clause with which the mea-  
sures open, and makes mandatory  
the closing of a service-at-cost  
contract between municipalities  
and traction corporations within  
six months after the bill becomes  
law.  
If they fail to agree the Pub-

lic Service Commission will be  
empowered to fix rates.  
The measures are couched in such  
ambiguous language that it would be  
quite the most able of constitutional  
lawyers to demonstrate their real  
meaning, and the only chance the  
public will have of learning their real  
intent is by hearing which has been  
ordered.  
Provision is made that, when the  
measures become law, munic-  
ipalities "may," and traction compa-  
nies "shall," enter into negotiations  
for a service-at-cost agreement. This  
means that the traction companies  
and the local administrations shall  
get together and select a third party,  
and that the trio will make the rates  
of fare. The third party is presumed  
to represent the public.

Assemblyman Jenks, the sponsor  
of the bills, who hails from Broome  
County, said to-day that both propo-  
sals were handed to Chairman  
Martin of the Judiciary Committee,  
and that Mr. Martin asked Mr. Jenks  
to present them.  
"The first bill," he said, "emanated  
from the counsel of the up-State  
Public Service Commission, Judge  
Kellogg. The service-at-cost bill  
came from the New York Electric  
Railways Association. It was hand-  
ed to me by Chairman Martin of the  
Judiciary Committee, and I took it  
to Commissioner Cummings of the  
Legislative Bill Draft Department to  
have him put it in shape for passage.  
I have arranged for a hearing be-  
fore the Judiciary Committee of the  
Assembly on both bills on Tuesday,  
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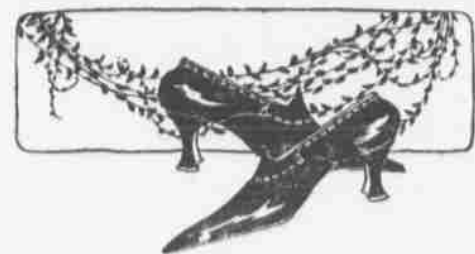
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